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FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Written statement submitted by the International Movement against all Forms of Discrimination and Racism, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[5 February 1996]

GE.96-10853 (E)

A meeting of human rights experts from the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and universities in the Asian and Pacific region convened on 26-28 July 1995 in Osaka, Japan, by the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Centre, a member of the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations.

1. The universality and indivisibility of all human rights enriched by the varied historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of States is affirmed. It is therefore recommended that a holistic approach in realizing all human rights be adopted.

2. The increasing compartmentalization of human rights work in the United Nations as well as the lack of human rights perspective in the programmes of other United Nations agencies is noted. It is recommended that coordination of human rights programmes and strengthening of human rights mechanisms and procedures be made. It is likewise recommended that human rights principles be incorporated in all United Nations programmes and activities. The concerned United Nations agencies should be held accountable for their actions in this regard.

3. The necessity of the United Nations focus on implementation of human rights instruments is affirmed. It is recommended, however, that its standard-setting function be continued for the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of socially-disadvantaged people.

4. The creation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is lauded. It is recommended, however, that sufficient staff and financial resources be provided for effective compliance with its mandate. It is likewise recommended that the High Commissioner consider submitting a plan of action for undertaking programmes in the Asian and Pacific region to the United Nations General Assembly. Such a plan of action should include a critical review of the activities of the United Nations agencies in the region. It is further recommended that, in making and implementing such a plan of action, consultation with, and the support of, human rights organizations in the region be sought as much as possible.

5. The significance of promoting human rights in the Asian and Pacific region is reaffirmed. It is recommended that the United Nations take steps to have more physical presence in the region, such as having a regional office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, holding sessions of the Commission on Human Rights, and providing more technical assistance designed to strengthen the domestic laws and structures of States in the region.

6. The need for a regional human rights mechanism in the Asian and Pacific region is affirmed, while the reluctance of States in the region to support the establishment of such a regional structure is noted. It is thus recommended that a two-step process be adopted that will facilitate continuing dialogue on this matter among States and will be the basis for the eventual establishment of the regional structure. It is likewise recommended that the subregional human rights structures be established prior to the creation of a regional structure. It is finally recommended that the United Nations, along with non-governmental institutions, facilitate the continuing discussion among States in the region on this matter.